capacity of the digital gateway exchanges and increase the number of international circuits to meet the growing demand of traffic.

[*Translation*]

Abolition of House Tax

539. SHRI PHOOL CHAND VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to abolish house tax on Janata flats allotted under new pattern scheme, 1979;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS: (SHRI M.M. JACOB): (a) to (c). Residential properties upto the rateable value of Rs. 1, 000/- are exempt from payment of property taxes. At present there is no proposal to abolish property tax on Janata Flats with rateable values above Rs. 1, 000/-.

[*English*]

Kidnapping of the Editor of "Janpath Samachar"

540. SHRI GOVIND CHANDRA MUNDA: Will the Minister of Information and Broadcasting be pleased to state:

(a) whether the editor of the Hindi daily Janpath Samachar has been kidnapped recently in Siliguri; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Press Council of India in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BRODCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) The editor of the Hindi daily Janpath Samachar has reportedly been arrested recently in Siliguri.

(b) Press Council of India has not taken any action in the matter as Section 14 (3) of the Press Council Act, 1978 debars it from holding an inquiry into any matter in respect of which, any proceeding is pending in a Court of Law. The Press Council of India has noted that the supreme Court is seized of this matter.

Caste Based Reservation Policy

541. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of WELFARE pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of Teachers led by the former president of Delhi University Teachers' Association Dr. S.S. Rathi, called on him on October 9, 1991 urging on him to refrain from Caste-based reservation Policy and to take steps to evolve a consensus policy on social justice through a national debate; and

(b) if so, reaction of the Union government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) No record is available of any such meeting.

(b) Government believe that social justice has to be promoted in an atmosphere of social harmony and peace. The OM dated 25.9. 91 amending the earlier OM. of 13.8. 90,provides preference to poorer sections among the SEBCs and additional reservation of 10% in civil services and posts under the Government of India for the other Economically backward Sections of the People who are not covered by any existing scheme

of reservation, was issued after consultation with political parties at the Center. Further consultations with the Chief Ministers of State Governments leaders of political parties would be held to evolve, if possible, a consensus on the question of determining the economic criteria referred to in the OM of 25.9.91.

Badhu Power Station In Rajasthan

542. SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) since when the work for setting up Badhu power station has been in progress in Rajasthan and the location thereof;

(b) the target date fixed for starting power generation as per the original plan and the time by which the power generation is likely to commence and the reasons for delay in this regard; and

(c) the details of expenditure proposed to be incurred and likely to be incurred on these power stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Import of Newsprint.

543. SHRI RAMASH. RAY PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the STC has imported 29, 000 metric tonnes of glazed newsprint;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the rate of newsprint now imported is cheaper than the newsprint imported previously;

(d) whether it is sufficient to meet the demand during the current financial year; and

(e) if not, the precautionary measures taken by the Government in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) and (b). according to the information furnished by State Trading Corporation, they had contracted for 29,000 MTs of glazed newsprint for the year 1991-92 out of which contract for 10,000 Mts has been cancelled.

(c) yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). The requirement of glazed newsprint is met subject to availability of foreign exchange.

Fencing of Indo-Pak and Indo Bangladesh Border

544. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be please to state:

(a) whether work of fencing on the Indo-pak border from Punjab to Gujarat has been completed;

(b) if not, the hurdles being faced in completing this work and the action being taken to remove the hurdles;

(c) whether there is a comprehensive plan of fencing the entire Indo-Bangladesh borders; and

(d) if so, the time by which the Plan Is likely to be completed?